

## Deficiencies cited at county nursing home

◆ **Sullivan County:**  
Contract with Genesis  
Healthcare started in  
2005.

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A resident at the Sullivan County nursing home recently fled from the facility and tumbled down an embankment, breaking her wrist.

The incident was one of 11 deficiencies recently discovered by investigators with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services.

"It's like having kids," Sullivan County Manager Ed Gil de Rubio said of the nursing home business.

"You've got to be very attentive and occasionally things go wrong. We don't make light of it. We take it very seriously."

According to a report by state investigators, the nursing home patient was able to exit the facility around 5:30 p.m. on March 31 because of a faulty magnetic door latch. A passing motorist saw the woman fall down a 15-foot embankment and alerted the nursing staff.

The resident was transported to Valley Regional Hospital in Claremont where she was originally diagnosed as having sprained her wrist.

"The nursing staff treated her accordingly," Gil de Rubio said. "And then somehow or somewhere, the radiologist gave another opinion, that it was a fracture, but we did not find out about it until the paper mysteriously showed up in her file." In a response to the state report, nursing home manager Scott Wojtkiewicz said the woman's treatment plan had been updated and the door latch fixed.

In another incident, a tube of Vitamin A&D ointment was left on a resident's nightstand along with a tube of Elta Seal ointment. The resident, who had not been ordered by a doctor to use any of the ointments, mixed the substances on a spoon and then licked it, according to the state report. The mixture was not ingested and no ill health effects resulted, the report said.

Many of the deficiencies noted by the state were reported to DHHS by the nursing home staff as soon as they were discovered, Wojtkiewicz said, including a medication error found after the investigation took place.

Since January 2005, Sullivan County has had a contract with Genesis Healthcare to provide administrative services at the nursing home, located at the county complex in Unity. De-

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spite a \$56,000 third-quarter deficit, Gil de Rubio said the company has improved the financial standing and work ethic at the nursing home.

"I think Genesis has done a terrific job," he said, especially in a place like Sullivan County, where conditions at the nursing home are highly politicized.

The company has made the nursing home a more viable

business and added skilled care to its offerings, he said.

Assistant Nursing Director April Bartley, a Unity native, resigned this week, citing "an adversarial relationship between management and staff" resulting from "a way too liberal union contract." Gil de Rubio said contentious negotiations with the union are ongoing.

County commissioners earlier

this week put \$250,000 into the county budget as a management fee for Genesis over the coming year. Gil de Rubio said he hopes the quality of care and the financial situation at the nursing home will continue to improve under Wojtkiewicz's leadership.

"We've got to forget about the past and come up with a formidable direction for the future and go with it," he said.